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AUTHOR Olson, John P.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a three-phase program for curtailment of vandalism and theft that was implemented in a Wisconsin high school. Using decision-making models as described by Kohlberg, the program was designed to respond to a variety of moral reasoning levels present across grade levels. Thus, phase 1 of the program was designed to manage or apprehend students whose behaviors are not dictated by morals or conventions--Kohlberg's concept of premoral behavior. Phase 2 was designed to deter those negative behaviors motivated by Kohlberg's concept of preconventional reasoning. Finally, phase 3 was designed to direct the logic and sense of students motivated by Kohlberg's concept of conventionality. The program not only reduced the costs and incidence of vandalism and thefts, the paper concludes, but positively affected the attitudes of younger students first entering high school. (Author/LD)

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A Three Phase Program to Curb Vandalism and Theft in Schools

by
John R. Olson, PhD.

Assistant Principal
James Madison Memorial High School
Madison, Wisconsin

The Problem

In October 1975 a study was conducted to research the incidence, costs, and causes of student vandalism at Memorial High School, Madison, Wisconsin. At that time, it was found that costs approached $7400 for the ten-month school year and separate incidents of vandalism numbered nearly 100. As an outgrowth of this assignment and research, a three phase program was developed to focus on motivations and causes of student vandalism and theft, and methods of curtailing the practice. In the five years since implementation, an ongoing program has steadily decreased yearly vandalism incidents from $7400 to $2000 (1978-79), and has reduced the number of vandalism incidents from 97 to 30 per year during the same time period.

As the writer interviewed parents, students (grades 3-12) and school administrators, a large number of descriptors were elicited as potential causes of vandalism and thefts. It was then possible to group these multiple causes into four major categories, each related to the Premoral, Preconventional and Conventional models for decision making as described by Kohlberg.[1] A summary of Kohlberg's model and various anti-social behavioral outgrowths follows in Table 1.

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[1]Kohlberg, L. and Turiel, E. Eds. Recent Research in Moral Development. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

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TABLE 1.

Kohlberg's Model	Related Cause of Vandalism or Theft
1. Premoral Reasoning The student has no awareness of obligation, "should", "have to", or external authority. Guided by "can do" or "want to do", whim and impulse.	1. Inappropriately Directed Anger or Frustration Rightness or wrongness of the act is not as important as "getting even" or "do it" for the sake of gratification, or excitement.
2. Preconventional Reasoning The student begins to recognize the concepts of good and bad in terms of reward, punishment or exchanged favors.	2. Lack of Ownership and Fear of Apprehension "It's not mine so why not ruin it if it's part of the school?" "Maybe not though - I might get caught."
3. Conventional Model Maintaining the expectation of family or group, regardless of consequences.	3. Peer Acceptance or Values Group acceptance, "Everybody's doing it, so why not me." The behavioral outgrowth can be negative or positive, depending on the group norms.

It can be seen that the incidence of vandalism as an outgrowth of anger, dares, conventionality and various fears or incentives is thus related to the level of moral reasoning a student has developed. It should be noted that these levels of reasoning are not always related to chronological age in a linear sense. Demonstration of reasoning and subsequent behavior far less mature than a typical high school norm is common in the profile of a teenage vandal or thief.

In addition, over time, it appears that the conventionality of practicing vandalism resides within a minority of students, but this percentage may increase significantly for a particular school district even though the majority of the student society may repudiate such practices. In sum, if a conventional norm is to vandalize, curtailment is extremely difficult unless a curtailment program addresses long range attitude development through a program designed to keep the

vandalizing minority to an absolute minimum, as well as to apprehend or deter the contemporary practitioners.

A THREE PHASE RESPONSE

Because any school population may contain students who demonstrate various stages of moral reasoning, there is probably no single method for curtailing all vandals or thieves. Accordingly, three different phases of response were designed to: 1) manage or apprehend those students whose behaviors are not dictated by morals or conventions (Kohlberg's concept of Premoral behavior); 2) deter those negative behaviors motivated by Kohlberg's concept of Preconventional reasoning; 3) direct the logic and sense of students motivated by Kohlberg's concept of Conventionality. The three phase response program is summarized in Table 2.

ATTITUDE SHAPING - A RESPONSE TO CONVENTIONAL DECISION MAKING

While Response Phase One deals primarily with apprehension of the Premoral student or physical prevention of theft and vandalism, and while Phase Two deters the Preconventional student, a long range program which focuses on the need for students to curb vandalism and theft as a norm or convention may pay the greatest dividends. In this program high school student leaders are asked to solicit 12 to 15 classmates from each of the four high school grade levels to visit nearby elementary and middle schools. During the visits students discuss the causes and need for control of vandalism and theft (See Appendix C). Implied is the obvious modeling and subtle peer value inculcation which occurs. The clear messages are, "Everybody's NOT doing it, and YOU have the responsibility to stop it." Television and newspaper coverage of the efforts and successes of the visiting students are given wide dissemination, not only as a way of recognizing them, but to indicate to other high school and younger students that the student leaders do not value vandalism. In appreciation, letters of

TABLE 2. A THREE PHASE RESPONSE TO VANDALISM AND THEFT

Response Phase	Kohlberg's Behavior Model	Curtailment Response Utilized
Response Phase One Management, apprehension, prevention	Premoral Reasoning (Can do; Want to) Students not motivated by fear, reward or convention.	A. Vandal and Theft Proofing the Building 1. Theft (Prevention through Management) a. Replace combination with key locks. b. Repairing damaged lockers, locks, door handles and security systems. c. Movement sensitive intrusion alarms for night security. d. Weekend building checks by custodians. e. Theft and vandalism incidence charts (see "B" below). 2. Vandalism (Prevention) a. Replace thermostats with aspirator boxes. b. Replace glass with Lexan in high student traffic areas. c. Repair damage quickly. d. Replace aluminum door hardware with stainless steel mechanisms. e. Replace paneled surfaces with formica panels. f. Place wood railings across large panes of glass. g. Better outdoor lighting. h. Regular bathroom visits by faculty. B. Theft and Vandalism Incidence Monitoring (Apprehension and Prevention) Charts which correlate time, location, costs, grade of theft victims. These charts are utilized to station student and faculty monitors in areas of highest incidence. C. Rewards (Apprehension) Cash incentives for information leading to the apprehension of Premoral vandals. Probably not a deterrent to the Premoral vandal; however, students who witness vandalism will often turn in the Premoral vandal's name for cash. D. Orientation (Prevention) During the first week of school students of all grades are oriented to the cause of theft, how to prevent it, how to mark valuables and areas and times of highest incidence.
Response Phase Two Deterrence through apprehension and/ or punishment.	Kohlberg's Behavior Model Preconventional Reasoning (Good = reward or pleasure; Bad = pain or punishment). Student responds to reward and avoids punishment.	Curtailment Response Utilized A. Publicly advertising the fact that an offered reward led to the apprehension of the vandal. (The vandal is not named). Use of the reward deters the Preconventional vandal or thief for fear of apprehension or punishment.
Response Phase Three Long range convention or attitude shaping.	Kohlberg's Behavior Model Conventional Reasoning Maintaining the expectation of the group, "Everybody is/is not doing it." I have some responsibility to stop vandalism.	Curtailment Response Utilized A. Attitudinal Shaping This is a long range program in which concerned high school students visit middle and elementary schools to discuss various causes of vandalism, positive ways of responding to these causes, the necessity of acting with a sense of community responsibility to prevent vandalism where possible, and to report the names of vandals where conventional approaches are not possible. Cited in this approach to younger children are costs of vandalism and the likelihood of losing various services, such as extra-curricular programs, should the practices not be curtailed. The two messages here are: 1) "Everybody's NOT doing it", and 2) YOU have responsibility to take action if you see an act of vandalism.

recommendation for college or employment are written for each student on request; letters or commendation are written to each participant and to their parents; and recognition at school assemblies is also provided. This exposure and recognition has elevated participation in vandalism curtailment projects to a valued position among students.

OUTLOOK

The cumulative effect of this program has not only reduced the costs and incidence of vandalism and thefts, but has clearly affected the attitudes of younger students first entering the high school. Vandalism is no longer a "norm", and more students are offering information about acts of vandalism or theft as an extension of moral conscience rather than to collect rewards. As future ninth grade classes enroll, new goals will be set for each class to reduce vandalism and theft progressively each year, and to see if it can exceed last year's record of reduction.

SUMMARY

A three phase program of vandalism and theft curtailment has been implemented in one high school which includes monitoring, management, structural prevention and long range attitude development. The program was designed to respond to a variety of moral reasoning levels present across grade levels for the students of Memorial High School, Madison, Wisconsin. Restructuring the building, monitoring the location and time of thefts and vandalism, and offering rewards has been found effective in controlling those students who vandalize or commit thefts from a Permoral or Preconventional decision-making reference. Rewards and publicity of the apprehension of vandals and thieves directly responds to the the fear component of the Preconventional student decision maker, while ethical, moral and logical appeals of concerned high school leaders to

elementary and middle school students has proven effective in creating a convention which demonstrates that vandalism and theft are a non-valued practice for the majority of students across grade levels, and that students must take responsibility for curtailment.

APPENDICES

A. Theft and Vandalism Incidence Charts
B. Theft and Vandalism Report Forms from which incidence charts are developed.
C. Outlines of materials used to conduct visits to elementary (grades 3-5) and middle schools (grades 6-8), including scripts and award certificates.

APPENDIX A

THEFT CORRELATION SHEET

(Enter Date and Item)

	A Wing	West Foyer	B Wing	East Foyer	Girls P.E.	Boys P.E.	Bike Rack	Other
8:15								
9:30								
10:30								
11:30								
12:30								
1:30								
2:30								
3:30								

APPENDIX B

JAMES MADISON MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

THEFT REPORT

_____
Report Date

Teacher/Student _____ Grade _____ _____
Homeroom Advisor/#

Home Address & Phone _____

Theft Date ___/___/___ _____ Taken Between _____m. and _____m.
Month/Day/Year Day of Week

Taken From - Wing _____

Locker Room _____

Locker No. _____ Wing Location _____

Room _____

Other _____

Bike Theft - Brand (Boys/Girls/Color/Model) _____

Gears (3, 5, 10) _____

Special Equipment _____

Serial No. _____

License No. _____

Reported to Police: Yes / No

Items Taken and Description (Watch - color, sweep second, calendar, scratches; Clothing - marks, tears, I.D.):

_____

_____

_____

Evidence of Lock Picking, Prying, Locker Damage:

Suspects or Special Information:

APPENDIX C

VANDALISM PROGRAM SCRIPT
FOR USE IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

1. Co-spokespersons

   a. Vandalism has been a problem at Memorial High School for several years. Fortunately, it's on its way out and we'd like to tell you why, and what all of us can do to reduce it even more.

   b. First, What is Vandalism?

      Student 1 - Broken windows
      Student 2 - Grafitti on walls
      Student 3 - Bathroom fires
      Student 4 - Littering halls and bathrooms
      Student 5 - Spray painting buildings
      Student 6 - Breaking door closers
      Student 7 - Damaging fire extinguishers

   c. Second, we'd like to tell you what we think of that kind of behavior.

      1. Stupid
      2. Wasteful
      3. "Out of it"
      4. Done by a very small percentage
      5. Makes a good looking building lousy
      6. Violates our rights - draft through broken windows
         bathroom - pig pen

   d. Third, we'd like to talk to you about the causes of vandalism and what students have been doing to reduce the occurrence since 1975.

      1. 1975 - $10,000 at Memorial High School
      2. 1979 - $2,000 at Memorial High School
      3. To stop it people like us have gone to elementary and middle schools and appealed for help.
      4. Help us to stop it all over the Memorial community and especially in the schools.
      5. Most kids want to help, but there's always a few .....
      6. And lately they've been sorry.

   e. What Causes Vandalism? (On Board)

      1. Well, one cause is anger - mad at parents, mad at teachers, or mad at Principals.
      2. How will you handle it if someone says, "Want to get even--kick in the window"!!
      3. Or what if someone says, "Who cares, it's not yours -- go ahead and break it". (Lack of ownership on board)
      4. Or, "Chicken, I dare you. You're a _____ if you don't." (Dare, peer pressure).
      5. Or, "What a drag - let's stir up some action around here". (Bored)

   f. Well, obviously there are some substitute activities for each of these, but some times substitutes aren't enough. Once in a while it has to be really tough.

   g. Yeah, how would you like to have a price on your head - really - a $25.00 reward for the person who broke a window.

h. That has happened and not only does the vandal pay for what he or she breaks, the vandal also gets a police record.

i. So, we'd like to talk to you a little more in some smaller groups and discuss some of the causes and what we can do to prevent a worse problem.

j. That problem is plain and simple - a lack of money. If you have costs for books and salaries and classroom stuff and you also have costs for extra curricular things - fun things like

Band	Choir	Debate	Yearbook	Clubs
Orchestra	Forensics	Plays	Newspaper	Athletics

You know what's going to be cut out if vandalism costs continue to rise.

k. In 1975 Rockford, Illinois, dropped all sports programs from their high schools due to high costs and not enough money.

l. Madison and Rockford are almost identical cities in size, population and taxes. DO YOU WANT A SCHOOL THAT IS JUST CLASSES AND NO FUN?

m. Now maybe you can see why WE need to do something about vandalism.

Small Groups

What are 4 causes? (Board)
How do you handle anger? boredom? dares? lack of ownership?
If one or two people get away with it should all of us be penalized for it?
What can you do if you're afraid to tell on someone. (Anonymous note or call, go as a group, in confidence, to a trusted teacher, have a parent call)
Remember - your name doesn't have to come out unless you go to court and then the police can protect you.

The Reward Works

In two years 18 out of 20 broken windows have been paid for by putting out rewards, and one guy goes to court this week for a juvenile delinquency charge.

So the real messages are:

1. Don't do vandalism.
2. Tell on those who do vandalism.
3. Talk others who might vandalize into not doing it.

Larger Groups

Summary

1. Threat to schools, and fun things in schools - inconvenient for all.
2. Causes - how to handle
3. Our responsibility - STOP VANDALISM, EVEN IT YOU HAVE TO TELL ON SOMEONE.

Vandalism Control Program
For Use in Elementary Schools

Traditional program: Four or five Memorial High School students visit a classroom of 25 to 30 elementary or middle school students for about 45 minutes. The program is conducted in both large and small groups in order to provide them an idea of what the problem consists of, what its causes are, and what should be done about the problem. The general concept is "vandalism is not carried on or valued by the great majority of young people, and that vandalism hurts everyone - therefore, everyone has a responsibility to stop it."

1. Large Group (5-6 minutes). Introduce yourself as a Memorial student who, along with other students, are concerned about a major problem - vandalism. Here are some reasons why we're concerned (fear loss of extra curricular activities; damage, pride).

   a. Do you know what vandalism is? (Show and tell - write examples on chalkboard).
   b. That's really good - you definitely know what it is now we'd like to show you what causes people to vandalize. Remember what we are going to do right now is NOT really an act of vandalism - it is just an example of what causes vandalism - LISTEN FOR THE CAUSES.
   c. Short play - 2 vandals. Boy am I mad at that teacher - she gave me a zero just because I looked at your paper. Yeah, I got one too, plus my parents got on my case for doing that - she even called them. You know it would really be cool to get even with her for that. Yeah - look there are some papers she uses in her classes - let's mess them up. I don't know, what if she finds out. Chicken, I dare you to do it - what do you care any way, it's not ours - go ahead. (Tears up papers). Vandals exit. Two other students watching say "Did you see that?" That was really stupid. That creep out to be turned in to the principal. I don't know, I don't like to narc. It isn't narcing to tell on people who wreck stuff that belongs to us. I don't know they might find out and come after us. (Students leave).
   d. What were the causes (Put Anger, boredom, dared and not theirs on the chalkboard). What do you think the two students should do about telling the principal? Well to talk about the causes of vandalism and what to do about vandalism we would like to split up into small groups.

2. Small Groups (20-25 minutes)

   a. Introduce yourself again - try to remember each of their names.
   b. Go over the four causes of vandalism and what to do about each.
      1) Anger - positive outlets, talk it out with a frined; be the friend they can talk to.
      2) Boredom - discuss various age group activities, after school sports - need to invite people to participate - vandals are often loners.
      3) Dares - It doesn't take any courage to vandalize and run - it takes more to say no when you are called a chicken.

4) Not mine or yours - It really is, tax dollars pay for it so it belongs to ALL OF US. Now if the Board of Education has to decide between "fun things" and arithmetic, reading, spelling, etc., the "fun things" are going to be cut. Do you want one or two people to cut your recess, your gym equipment, orchestra, library? Well, neither do we and so we're saying that you SHOULD tell the principal who did the vandalism so they can pay for it. (Anonymous notes, go in a large group, tell a trusted adult).

c. We'd also like to ask you to join us in the "STAMP OUT VANDALISM CLUB" and brought these certificates for you today. By signing this with us, you become an official member and promise to help control vandalism.

d. Sign the certificates with the students, and then have one of the Memorial students place the red "Stamp Out Vandalism" sign on the certificate. Also, point out the names of various athletes and students in activities - they really like to get autographs.

3. Return to Large Group

a. Summarize what vandalism is (list on board).
b. Summarize what causes vandalism (Causes on board).
c. Ask your own group leaders what their group decided could be done about each of the causes.
d. Ask your group leaders to say whether they think the vandals should be turned in to the principal. Talk about rewards used at Memorial.
e. Ask the elementary and middle school students if they will join you in controlling vandalism.
f. Finish by signing certificates, shaking hands, thanking them for listening.

MEMORIAL AREA VANDALISM CONTROL COMMITTEE

WE, the undersigned, promise to help
stop destroying property
and help stop others who want to destroy property.

STAMP OUT VANDALISM !

_____ _____

Memorial High School Member

Lifetime Members